

REMARKS

Claim amendments

The claim amendments reflect amendments to the claims as set forth in the preliminary amendment submitted on filing. Claim 12 is amended to delete the repeated word “wherein”. Claim 31 is amended to delete the phrase “in which” and replace it with “wherein”, to conform to U.S. practice.

Rejection of claims 1-10, 17-33, and 48-62

The Examiner rejected claims 1-10, 17-33, and 48-62 as obvious over Wells in view of Lind. The rejection should be withdrawn in view of the following remarks.

Claim 1

Claim 1 is directed to a multiplayer gaming system which features a gaming server which is operative to group a plurality of player stations into a single instance of multiplayer game in which each player plays separate instances of a single-player game. This aspect of the claim does not appear to have been fully appreciated by the Examiner in the office action. The grouping of players, and determining of an outcome for the resulting multiplayer game as a function of the combined results of the separate instances of the single-player game, is a completely unique and unobvious approach to multiplayer gaming and is not disclosed or suggested at in the slightest by either Wells or Lind.

The specification gives a number of examples of how this invention can be practiced for example where each player plays the single-player game of slots, but all

such players are grouped together into a single instance of a multiplayer game. See e.g., the 10 examples from page 21 to page 33 line 32. As set forth in claim 1, the administration facility is operative to determine the outcome of the multiplayer game as a function of the combined results of the separate instances of the single player game. For example, in Example 3 “winner take all” multiplayer game, specification at page 24, the payouts corresponding to all successful results from the individual instances of play (bottom of page 23) are accumulated into a prize pool and the participating player with the highest-paying successful result wins the prize pool (top of page 24).

The applicant respectfully submits that the Examiner’s analysis of claim 1 in the office action fails to adequately address the grouping aspect of the claim, and also fails to explain how this grouping of single players into a single instance of a multiplayer game is obvious from the references. The Examiner states that Wells discloses a multiplayer gaming system in which a player station is capable of playing a single-player game and placing a wager on the outcome of the multiplayer game. This statement is not accurate. Wells discloses players playing and making wagers on outcomes of single-player games (slots, see Figure 5A and paragraphs [0086] – [0088]), not multiplayer games. The Wells reference contains no suggestion of a gaming server which is operative to group all of the slots players using the terminals of Figures 5 and 5A into a single instance of a multiplayer game and described and claimed in this application.

The Lind reference is directed to bingo games, which are inherently multiplayer games. However, in Lind there is no suggestion that an instance of the multiplayer game (bingo) comprises a pool or grouping of individual players playing separate instances of single-player games.

Assuming it is even possible to combine Wells and Lind, it does not at all follow that it would be obvious or even possible to group separated instances of Wells' slots game into Lind's Bingo game. The two games are entirely different from each other. The more reasonable combination of the two references is to use Wells' biometric data features to determine whether the player is permitted to make wagers or participate in the bingo games of Lind. (See Wells, Abstract, paragraph [0007]). This combination has nothing to do with the present invention.

The applicant further takes issue with the Examiner's statement at page 3 of the office action that all the claimed elements were known in the art. This is not correct. The claimed elements of grouping multiple players playing individual instances of single-player games into a single instance of a multiplayer game, and determining an outcome for the resulting multiplayer game as a function of the combined results of the separate instances of the single-player game is not found in either Lind or Wells.

The dependent claims from claim 1 recite further aspects of the invention which are not disclosed in Lind or Wells. The applicants do not acquiesce in the Examiner's interpretation of Wells and Lind in the office action. However, it is not deemed necessary to address them in detail at this juncture given that claim 1 is not obvious over the references.

Claim 33

Claim 33 is directed in method format and recites "enabling each one of a plurality of players to participate in a multiplayer game by playing a separate instance of

a same single-player game The claim further recites “determining an outcome of the multiplayer game as a function of the combined results of the separate instances of the single-player game.” These steps corresponding in substance to the grouping and outcome determination aspects of claim 1 which are addressed above. Hence, the arguments with respect to claim 1 are applicable to 33 and are incorporated herein. The rejection of claim 33 and claims dependent therefrom based on Wells and Lind should be withdrawn.

Claims 11-16, 44-48

Claims 11-16 and 44-48 stand rejected over Wells and Lind and further in view of Ko (US 2004/0256803). Ko is cited for teaching of handing tie results and treating the tie results as a favourable outcome, and is directed to the game of Baccarat. Ko does not suggest grouping multiple instances of single-player games into a single instance of a multiplayer game and therefore does not overcome the fundamental deficiencies of Wells and Lind explained above. Ko’s tie concepts have no applicability to Wells’ slots machines, since in slots the player is not playing against a dealer or any other player. There are no “ties” in slots. At best, Ko’s tie concepts could be applied to Lind’s bingo game, but in that situation there is still no grouping of multiple instances of single player games into a single instance of a multiplayer game. Therefore, claims 1 and 33 from which these claims depend are not obvious over Wells in view of Lind and Ko.

The Examiner is requested to withdraw the instant rejections and allow the application.

Respectfully submitted,

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CERTIFICATE OF MAILING

The undersigned hereby certifies that the foregoing response to office action is being deposited as first class mail postage prepaid in an envelope addressed to Mail Stop Amendment, Commissioner for Patents P.O. Box 1450 Alexandria VA 22313-1450 on this 18 th day of June, 2008.

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